

functions of district pastors has also been developed that will strengthen church members who offer voluntary services in the spreading of the gospel. The new leadership manual for district pastors will be used to guide them in their ministerial duties. Finally, with expenditures reduced at the conference level and new conference administration in place, local churches should have more financial resources for work at the local level.

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Andrews University, Seventh-day  
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Title: An Adventist Missiological Response to Traditional Beliefs in Kenya

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Seventh-day Adventist Christians in Kenya struggle to practice pure biblical teaching because many still practice their African traditional beliefs. Many of those traditional beliefs are inconsistent with biblical teachings. This problem has contributed to syncretism that has weakened the Adventist message in Kenya. Many church members follow traditional beliefs because they fear to be condemned by others in society. The traditional belief that says a dead person

continues to live and can communicate with the family is still strongly supported by many people in Kenya. This traditional belief contradicts biblical teaching concerning the dead.

Other traditional issues church members struggle with that are in conflict with biblical teachings include widow and widowers' issues, witchcraft and magic, demonization and how to deal with it, polygamy, genital mutilation, and several others. These African traditional beliefs have not been adequately addressed by the Adventist Church in Kenya. The problem has existed in the Church for decades and should be addressed because it contradicts biblical teachings and Adventist fundamental beliefs.

This study looked at the background and practices of several African traditional beliefs. Books, journals, articles, and dissertations from the James White library helped the researcher understand African traditional beliefs in the Kenyan context. An Adventist biblical response to the issues of witchcraft, funeral rites, wife-inheritance, death rituals, and demonization was developed.

A critical contextualization process was suggested so that local people are involved in discussing the issues and dealing with them in biblical ways. This approach empowers church members to deal biblically with the challenges traditional beliefs pose.

The interviews conducted in Kenya indicated that a number of Kenyan Seventh-day Adventists

still believe and practice African traditional beliefs. Many reasons were given including the fact that the people's worldview was not impacted by biblical thought, failure by missionaries to address the traditional beliefs of the people, fear of taboos caused by the spirits of the dead, and failure to openly discuss traditional issues.

An analysis of the traditional beliefs on the state of the dead, death rituals, widowhood and wife inheritance, soul and spirit, witchcraft, and demonization indicate that Adventists need much biblical study concerning the dead. Biblical views of soul and spirit based on Gen 2:7 and Gen 2:21-22 do not support the traditional belief that a soul continues to live after death.

While some traditional beliefs were consistent with biblical teachings, there were some which

were found to be inconsistent.

The gospel the church proclaims is about repentance and new birth in Jesus Christ (2 Cor 5:17; John 3:3) Jesus promised his followers the power of the Holy Spirit before they could become his witnesses (Acts 1:8-9). The new birth experience should result in believers following Jesus instead of those traditional practices which are opposed to biblical teaching.

Kenyan Adventists should be educated to understand the meaning of being a true disciple of Christ Jesus, and as such should not practice biblical and traditional beliefs at the same time. Such syncretism has weakened the church's evangelism to the Kenyan people. Therefore, there is an urgent need for church leaders to educate members on how to deal with traditional issues.



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